

STATEMENT

by

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Mr. President,

The Romanian delegation would like to congratulate you and other distinguished members of the Bureau on your election and assures you of our full support for a successful outcome of the Conference. I would also like to commend Dr. ElBaradei and his staff for the excellent work they done since the last General Conference, and in particular in addressing the new challenges and threats generated by nuclear terrorism.

I avail myself of this opportunity to welcome the Republic of Seychelles, Eritrea and Kyrgyzstan as new members of the IAEA.

Before introducing the achievements of the Romanian nuclear sector during this year, I would like to stress that Romania associates itself to the statement of the distinguished representative of Denmark delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Nuclear energy

Let me now present briefly the latest developments of the Romanian nuclear energy sector.

The Government of Romania attaches great importance to the development of nuclear power as an important contributor to the national electricity supply, and therefore the nuclear power continues to be a reliable source of energy for my country. Cernavoda NPP Unit 1 is now covering 11% from the national electricity demand.

Several key factors have determined the Romanian Government to adopt decisions to continue the construction work at Cernavoda Unit 2, but also to create opportunities for foreign investments at Cernavoda Unit 3. Firstly, high standards of nuclear safety performance were achieved in all national nuclear installations. Secondly, according to the international studies on mid-term electricity supply and demand in Romania, the expected continuation of the economic growth of about 5% will result in an energy deficit of 1000 Mwe by the year 2005, which should be covered by new capacities such as Cernavoda Unit 2. Finally, but very important, Romania has a well developed nuclear infrastructure and expertise that can support effectively the construction and operation of Cernavoda Unit 2.

As you may be aware, the commercial contract for the completion of Cernavoda Unit 2 was signed last year between the SNN (National Company Nuclearelectrica) and its traditional partners - AECL Canada and ANSALDO Energia Italy. In addition, companies from France, USA and other states participate in the project.

The external financing is on the final stage - the bank was already selected and the loan agreements negotiated, and the sovereign guaranties with the Government approval shall be issued this month.

The national infrastructure is ready to meet the needs of the Unit 2 construction planning, in terms of nuclear fuel, heavy water supply and specific equipment. It will cover more than 50% of the investment.

Cernavoda NPP Unit 2 operation by the year 2005 will ensure more than 20% of the national electricity production, and consequently about 50% of electricity production will be generated in Romania by clean technologies such as nuclear and hydro.

The National Nuclear Strategy, which was recently endorsed by the Government, provides for continuation of the construction work to Unit 3, using bilateral operating and financing agreements such as BOT. A common feasibility study by “Nuclearelectrica” Co. and other international specialized companies will be issued in this regard.

As a matter of policy, Romania considers that nuclear technology power should be eligible as a Clean Development Mechanism technology under the Convention on Climate Change, taking into account its benefits for the greenhouse gas reduction. We are convinced that the Agency continues to do its utmost efforts for keeping the nuclear option open and for giving nuclear power a full and fair hearing in the multilateral debates within the framework of this Convention.

Nuclear safety and security

As we already pointed out on many occasions, another priority for my Government is to ensure high standards of nuclear safety and security of nuclear materials and installations. It is confirmed both by the National Nuclear Strategy and, by overall programs carried out for improving or adapting relevant national laws and regulations to the latest EU and IAEA standards. One good example in this regard is the process of strengthening the National Regulatory Body's (CNCAN) activities, which was also supported by the Agency and EU Commission.

Two important missions were conducted in Romania this year through the Agency, namely a full scope IRRRT mission in May, and an IPPAS mission in April, which resulted in a number of useful recommendations. Findings and recommendations made so far have been materialized in the ongoing process to amend the national nuclear basic law and regulations.

In the aftermath of the September 11th events, Romania joined the international efforts and initiatives aimed at preventing and combating international terrorism in all its aspects. Particular attention was paid in this regard to the implementation of the IAEA's Action Plan on nuclear terrorism, which was endorsed by the Board of Governors at its March session. Following our commitment to support these efforts and to promote international cooperation, Romania pledged in kind contributions. Recently, my Government informed the IAEA Secretariat on our readiness to organize this year a regional Pilot Course on Nuclear Threats – Counteracting Techniques.

Concrete proposals were submitted in this regard on timing and topics to be addressed by the course.

At the national level, CNCAN and other competent authorities reviewed the national legislative framework and regulations on nuclear safety and security of nuclear facilities and materials. As a result, new regulations on physical protection, including the use of Design Basic Threat, were issued in October 2001 and April 2002, respectively.

In addition, individual matrix were sent by CNCAN to each and every nuclear facility and operator with the view to reassess and further improve their physical protection systems against newly appreciated threats, including acts of nuclear terrorism. Following that process, CNCAN issued the Regulation on Guards and Security Personnel Qualification for Nuclear Facilities in June 2002, with the aim to improve the efficiency of the response measures in case of a terrorist attack against nuclear facilities.

With the Agency's support received under the TC Program a national Exercise on Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear Material and Radioactive Sources was organized in Romania on July 18, 2002. The main purpose of the exercise was to assess the national procedures and preparedness in case of such events, namely communication and coordination between national institutions; early warning and response; measurement capability; fact-findings and interface procedures.

Great efforts were made by the Romanian Government to speed up the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. Important progress was achieved in this regard for advancing the accession negotiations with the EU. Worth to mention the smooth implementation of *acquis communautaire* under the Chapters 22 and 14 on Environment and Energy, and in particular of the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection norms. Moreover, the implementation process of the recommendations contained in the Nuclear Safety Report of 2001 by the EU Council Working Group on Atomic Issues is already under way.

Nuclear legislative framework was also further improved. The Framework law on nuclear safety (Law 111/1996) was recently amended with the view to allow establishment of technical support organizations and create more flexibility in terms of financing regulatory activities by using extra-budgetary resources.

As regard to the ongoing process to harmonize the nuclear legislation with the IAEA and EU standards, two additional laws on the promotion of nuclear activities and on the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, including their final disposal were drafted. Before presenting the drafts to the Parliament for approval, the texts were submitted for consideration and further improvement to the IAEA Secretariat and EU Commission.

Nuclear non-proliferation remains for Romania an issue of utmost interest. I wish to reiterate Romania's committed to fulfill in good faith all obligations undertaken under the NPT and to further promote a responsible export control policy.

As a country with the Additional Protocol in force, my country will continue to grant full assistance and support to the Agency in carrying out activities related to its implementation but also other tasks related to nuclear non-proliferation in accordance with its statute.

Technical co-operation

The IAEA Technical Co-operation Program is an efficient way to complement our efforts for implementation of the national nuclear programs and strategies. I use this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the continuous support given to Romania by offering training and expertise through its TC programs.

As in the past, Romania will support the IAEA's TC activities by providing training for experts from developing countries, organizing regional seminars and workshops, as well as by sharing relevant information and expertise.

Romania reiterates its readiness to participate actively to the IAEA TC Program. We are confident that the Agency will continue to make full use of our national nuclear facilities (Centre of Excellence on Nuclear Safety at Cernavoda NPP; National Institute for Nuclear Research at Pitesti; IFIN- Bucharest) for its intended international and regional training. I would mention here that four regional seminars were successfully organized in Romania during this year.

The Institute for Nuclear Research is still in a process of fully converting its TRIGA research reactor from HEU to LEU. The Government attaches a great importance to the finalization of

HEU/LEU conversion and to the development of nuclear research activities in Romania, with the view to support the nuclear energy production and execution works at Cernavoda NPP, as well as to promote international cooperation in this specific field.

Unfortunately, no international assistance was identified so far to complete the conversion process, which had started at the US initiative in the framework of the RERTR Program in 1992, as a pilot project for TRIGA reactors. Nevertheless, we are confident that our efforts to complete the project will be complemented by the Agency through the TC program.

Another high priority for my country is the decommissioning of VVR-S Research Reactor. The reactor was definitely shut down by a Governmental Decision of 2002. The decommissioning plan will be finalized with the support of the Agency within the TC program. An important issue for us remains to return the spent fuel originating from this reactor in the Russian Federation. We hope therefore that the consultations held by the Secretariat concerning the arrangement for the safe management of research reactor fuel of Soviet/Russian origin will lead to a positive outcome.

Mr. President

I would like to ensure you of my country support for the IAEA Program and Budget for 2003-2004. We express our hope that IAEA will be able to keep the balance between its statutory and mandatory responsibilities and the further development of technical cooperation activities.

Before concluding my statement, I wish also to assure you that Romania will continue to make regular payments both to the Technical Co-operation Fund and to the Regular Budget, including for the Assessed Program Costs.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates, thank you for your kind attention.